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UNH Media Relations

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Media Relations

NH National Guard, ROTC Help Upcycle UNH Computers

April 21, 2011

DURHAM, N.H. – Three dozen older computers from the University of New Hampshire's chemistry department are headed to El Salvador, where they will find new life in a school in the town of San José Villanueva. Packing them and sending them safely on their way will be up to 20 military personnel – UNH Air Force ROTC cadets and New Hampshire National Guardsmen. The packing and transport from Parsons Hall to Pease Air Force Base will take place Tuesday, April 26, 2011, at approximately 11:30 a.m.

The Dell Optiplex computers are currently used in the Gladys Brooks Foundation Chemistry Computer Laboratories, undergraduate teaching labs that will undergo renovation later this spring as part of a larger renovation of Parsons Hall.

Loathe to send the computers to landfills, laboratory supervisor Amy Lindsay nonetheless knew that their age – the massive CPU monitors are a decade old, and the computers themselves are at least six years old – would make finding them a new home challenge.

"Everyone I talked to locally said they were too old to go to local schools," says Lindsay. "They're a good computer, though, and appropriate for this setting in El Salvador."

A student, Jordan Reddel '11, suggested that her father, Major General William Reddel of the New Hampshire National Guard (NHNG), could facilitate a new life for old computers through the NHNG's partnership with El Salvador and the teacher exchange it sponsors between the San José Villanueva school and Bow (N.H.) middle and high schools.

"We couldn't get involved in sending two computers here and three there. When this opportunity came up, we thought, 'this is great. This is a dream come true,'" says Lindsay.

When the labs close for renovation, UNH information technologists will "wipe" the computers three times, per UNH protocol, then load them with Windows XP. On Tuesday, the ROTC cadets and Guardsmen will pack all 36 computers, load them into trucks, and deliver them to Pease, where they will await transport to San José Villanueva.

Lindsay is grateful that the computers will continue to serve. "These are old computers, but they still have life in them," she says.

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea, and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 12,200 undergraduate and 2,300 graduate students.

-30-

Reporters and photographers are welcome to attend the packing session with military personnel, in the G wing of Parsons Hall, on Tuesday, April 26, 2011 beginning at 11:30 a.m.

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